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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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#### **Department of Workforce Education Names New Deputy Director**

Mr. George French of Hot Springs Village, a former state representative and educator, has been named as Deputy Director of Adult Education for the state Department of Workforce Education. He replaces Garland Hankins, who is retiring after serving as deputy director since 1991.

According to Dr. Steve Franks, Director of the Department of Workforce Education, Mr. French will be responsible for overseeing the state's adult education system. Adult education programs are free and serve Arkansans age 18 and over with a variety of needs – to assist their children with schoolwork; to upgrade basic reading, writing, and math skills for the workplace; to have a second chance to earn a high school diploma/GED; or to read, write, and speak English well. Adult education also works to help employers with employees who need to refresh and/or upgrade their basic educational skills to perform better in the workplace.

"I am excited about joining the department in this key position," Mr. French said. "I look forward to working with the many dedicated adult educators and literacy providers that we have here in Arkansas."

**(more)**

Mr. French has served as a legislative liaison for Governor Mike Huckabee since 2003. From 1997 to 2002, he was a member of the Arkansas House of Representatives serving Drew and Lincoln counties. During the 2001 legislative session, Mr. French served as House Chair of the Joint Budget Committee and was a member of the Revenue and Taxation and Agriculture and Economic Development legislative committees. Mr. French was also a member of the Education Committee and was an ex-officio member of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education.

As a lawmaker, Mr. French received several commendations, including the Arkansas Municipal League Distinguished Service Award in 2001, and the Arkansas Timber Producers Association's Legislator of the Year Award in 1999 and 2001. He was also honored with the Arkansas Municipal Police Association Appreciation Award in 1999.

Mr. French holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. For over 30 years, he worked in the Trumann, Osceola, and Monticello school districts as a teacher, coach, and administrator.

"Mr. French will continue to build upon the outstanding leadership that the program has been given the past 14 years by Garland Hankins," said Dr. Franks. "Literacy and low educational levels are still a challenge in Arkansas. Providing a quality adult education program is vital for the economic development of the state and gives individuals the opportunity to improve their quality of life through economic self-sufficiency. George French has a proven record of public service which will allow him to lead the adult education program in a very effective manner."

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